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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Post-Vacation Review

A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. M. L. DuMars, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, August 19, 1937.

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MR. DUMARS:

Resuming now from Washington, we're all set to spring that surprise we promised you on Tuesday. This surprise takes the form of someone well known to this audience, especially to the women who've been listening to her voice and writing to her for advice on homemaking these last four or five years. Yes, I know a lot of you have guessed it - Ruth Van Deman is back from her vacation. Back from California and Oregon and other points west, and looking like a million dollars!- - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Hold it, Mr. DuMars. Hold it right there. That sounds like Hollywood and - - -

MR. DUMARS:

You don't mean to say you went to California and didn't go to Hollywood?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh I went to Hollywood but I didn't stay long. I spent one morning driving around looking at the houses the stars live in, and admiring their flower gardens. Then I hurried on to a mountain top to have a look at the real stars.

MR. DUMARS:

Through that big telescope on Mt. Who'sit?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Mt. Wilson. Yes, I had a look at the stars by night from the top of Mt. Wilson, 6000 feet above sea level. But not through the 100-inch lens. It isn't mounted yet. But I saw plenty to dazzle me through the 12-inch lens. That brought the craters on the moon and Mars closer than I'd ever expected to see them.

MR. DUMARS:

See any people running around on Mars?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

No, I didn't get that good a close-up.

MR. DUMARS:

Well, what about close-ups on our national forests and parks? Did you visit any of them?

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Did I. I was in and out of national and state forests, national parks and monuments, as they call some of those wonders of nature out there, all the way from New Mexico right up to the Canadian border. And every time, I gave a salute to the Forest Service men. They're right on their job - - - enforcing their fire prevention rules, day and night, but letting people camp in the forests and get full recreation value from them. Out there small boys want to be forest rangers when they grow up.

MR. DUMARS:

Just the way I wanted to be a cowboy. Well, Miss Van Deman, did you visit any home economics projects on this trip?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Mr. DuMars, this was a vacation, personal and private.

MR. DUMARS:

Of course. That's the reason you came back with that million dollar look - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Mr. DuMars, skip it. Yes, of course, I talked to lots of home economists. I put in a very interesting afternoon in Dr. Agnes Fay Morgan's laboratories at the University of California in Berkeley. She showed us her famous black rats that turn gray haired on diets deficient in certain food factors, and then from gray back to black when they get the right kind of food.

MR. DUMARS:

Say, that is something. What is that anti-gray-hair factor?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Dr. Morgan isn't sure yet. It seems to be a part of the vitamin B complex, but she hasn't fully determined which part.

MR. DUMARS:

Then she isn't ready yet to tell us humans what to eat to keep our hair from turning gray.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Not yet. Her results are still in the realm of pure science. But speaking of the practical application of one's pet scientific theories to one's own home kitchen, I visited Maud Wilson's cabin out on the Oregon coast.

MR. DUMARS:

Did you, that's interesting. Were her kitchen tables, and sink, and stove, and so on, at perfect working height?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

They certainly were. I was back Tuesday in time to hear you and Josephine Hemphill talking about Miss Wilson's studies on kitchen arrangement.

MR. DUMARS:

I'll bet you wanted to break right in.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I certainly did, and say that Maud Wilson is one lady who practices what she preaches. Miss Wilson's house is a model of comfort, and convenience, and order. She has storage closets and shelves for everything, just as she describes in her bulletin. She even provides each guest with a private individual shelf in the bathroom for her toilet articles, and there were four of us in our party.

MR. DUMARS:

No waste corners in Miss Wilson's house.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

None, and yet it looks spacious and charming, not the least bit crowded or cluttered.

MR. DUMARS:

Well, Miss Van Deman, how did you come home from Oregon?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Via Western Canada and the Canadian Rockies. And let me tell you, Mr. DuMars, you're known to the U. S. Customs inspectors up there on the border between Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

MR. DUMARS:

Customs inspectors? What have they got against me?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Not a thing. They're part of the Farm and Home Hour audience - - - probably listening to us right now.

MR. DUMARS:

How do you know?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

When I crossed the border up there the other day and gave the inspector my name, he gave me a quick look and said "you talk on the Farm and Home Hour."

MR. DUMARS:

Wasn't that a thrill to have a Farm and Home Hour listener greet you at the border - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

It was that.

MR. DUMARS:

And how did you find things back at the Bureau of Home Economics?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Very lively. The wheels of research have been rolling right along. Josephine Hemphill has already announced our new bulletin for home bakers.

MR. DUMARS:

The one called "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry"?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

You certainly do know your titles, Mr. DuMars.

MR. DUMARS:

I know all titles that mean cakes, and pies, and hot biscuits. Any copies of that bulletin left?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, about 15,000, I believe, still available for free distribution.

MR. DUMARS:

Good. The 15,000 September brides-to-be better get busy right now and send in their orders for "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry" if they want to start the home baking right.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Glad to have them. But to get on with the progress in our research program. I found one corridor in our building full of small boys marching in for their anthropometric measurements.

MR. DUMARS:

(Haltingly) An - thro - po - metric?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh, hadn't you heard about our project on scientific measurements of the human body to serve as a basis for better sizing of garments and patterns? That's under way in seven States now besides the District of Columbia. We want to get measurements on enough boys and girls to provide a really accurate basis for sizes that will be typical of Young America. The garment manufacturers and pattern makers have been after us for a long time to make this study.

MR. DUMARS:

I see.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, they figure that better sized garments will help them cut down the loss from misfits and returned goods, loss in good will as well as cash. And we have the results from another nation-wide study coming out now - - - the one on consumer purchases, undertaken as a W.P.A. project. Our bureau has covered the towns and rural areas. I found preliminary reports for Greenfield, Massachusetts, and Moberly, Missouri, and Westbrook, Maine, and Boone, Iowa, and a lot more.

MR. DUMARS:

Any for Kansas?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes, a number of Kansas towns. I can't remember the whole list.

MR. DUMARS:

I'll have to come over to your bureau and study these releases. They must give a very interesting economic picture - - - of how families spend their money and what they get for it.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

They do. We've never had figures like this before to use as a basis for budget planning and extension programs. And they're going to be a lot of help to industry too.

MR. DUMARS:

Miss Van Deman, I expect you found a lot of letters waiting for you to answer.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Some. But the others on the staff had been very kind about that. But I did find one from a 4-H Club girl in Indiana that certainly made me take notice.

MR. DUMARS:

Is that so.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Wait a second. I think I brought her letter along. Yes, here it is. First she tells about the prizes she won on her textile exhibit. She says:

"I gave the various simple methods of classifying fabrics, such as the thread-breaking test for cotton and linen, feeling or touch test. And I made a big chart showing how a woolen fiber looks under a compound microscope; a cotton fiber, linen, silk, rayon.

"Now would you please answer these questions to help me? Since I want to show the buying public their mistakes in buying, and the wisest ways of buying clothing fabrics, domestics, etc., these are things I want to know.

1. In what buying points do people make the gravest mistakes?
2. Have you any literature explaining how to know the different fabrics?
3. What do the various labels on clothing and yard goods mean?
4. Are chemical tests for fabrics practical for a housewife?
5. Have you any charts showing interesting points about fabrics or colors? If not, where can I get such charts?"

MR. DUMARS:

Some order, Miss Van Deman. You'd have to write a book to answer all that, wouldn't you?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Just about. But I sent her some material and some references from which she can dig out most of the answers. Our bulletin on "Guides for buying sheets, blankets, and bath towels," and the leaflets on quality guides in buying ready-made dresses and women's cloth coats, they tell a lot about labels and fabrics and finishes. And I sent her a notice of our clothing selection charts.

MR. DUMARS:

H'm, are they something else new?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

New this summer. They're a set of nine big wall charts on women's and children's clothes. They have pictures and text calling attention to the points of quality to look for in buying or making different garments.

MR. DUMARS:

Sounds like teaching material for school use.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Or in extension groups.

MR. DUMARS:

Do you give those charts away?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

No, we can't afford to do that. But the whole set of nine charts sells for 40 cents, just enough to cover the printing costs.

MR. DUMARS:

I know a home economics teacher who would like to know about these charts. I'm going to tell her about 'em so she can get her order in. Then she can have them on hand when her school begins.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Which won't be long now. Vacations have a way of ending.

MR. DUMARS:

Worse luck for you, Miss Van Deman. But your experiences have inspired me to go places and see things. I'd like to hike right out for one of those national forests.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

There's Labor Day week end coming. Last call for all good campers. And now with your permission, Mr. DuMars, I'll make a bee line back to the Bureau of Home Economics and find out what else has happened while I was away.

Well, Thank you, Ruth Van Deman, we're glad you're back on the job, and we'll be looking for you again next Thursday.

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